

REMARKS

In response to the Examiner's Restriction Requirement, Applicant hereby elects the invention of Group I (e.g., drawn to the special technical feature of the punch spacing being smaller than the punch diameters, as defined by claim 2), with traverse. Applicant reserves the opportunity to file Divisional Applications for the non-elected inventions later.

Applicant respectfully traverses the Restriction Requirement for the following reasons. Although Groups I-VI are classified in different classes and subclasses, the Examiner's search with regard to all the Groups I-VI claims would be coextensive, such that there would be no (or very little) additional searching burden placed on the PTO in the examination of all the Groups I-VII claims in the same application.

Further, even assuming arguendo that a slight, additional searching burden was imposed upon the PTO if all the Groups I-VI claims were examined in the same application, the burden to the Applicant would be much greater in terms of financial considerations, since divisional applications are likely to be filed. Divisional applications are costly, with the present filing, issue, and maintenance fees alone being \$5,000. Thus, from a financial standpoint, Applicant's costs associated with filing and prosecuting divisional applications are believed to outweigh any additional costs (e.g., due to searching) incurred by the PTO if all claims were to be examined in the same application.

For the above reasons, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the Restriction Requirement, and examine all the Groups I-VI claims in the same application.

Further, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner's acknowledgment of the priority document received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau.

Early, favorable prosecution on the merits is respectfully requested.

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MARU.001

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Should the Examiner find the application to be other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary in a telephonic or personal interview.

A conditional petition is made for any extension of time which may become necessary. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any fees for such extension and to credit any overpayment in fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 50-0481.

Respectfully Submitted,



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